

Glossary



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Action limit/level	Value set for a parameter in a given matrix. Threshold established to launch an 'action' such as: notification, product recall, counter-analysis, destruction. Thresholds are based on regulatory admissible value limits (e.g.: MRL). In the absence of a reference standard, the threshold is proposed by the industry and validated by an authority.
Action threshold	Threshold at which the source of pollution must be determined and measures taken to reduce or exterminate it. See 'Action limit/level'.
Additional declaration	A statement required by an import country to be entered on a phytosanitary certificate and which provides specific additional information on a consignment regarding regulated pests.
Aggregate sample	The combined total of all the incremental samples taken from the lot or sub-lot.
Approval	Procedure by which a local or regional authority officially recognises that a body (e.g.: ICB), a laboratory (e.g.: laboratory accredited for microbiological analyses) or an individual (e.g.: self-evaluation system inspector) is competent to undertake specific tasks.
Approved/Accredited laboratory	Laboratory officially authorised, on the basis of its performance, to examine samples (which may be official samples). It can also be an 'accredited' laboratory under ISO 17025.
Attribute sampling plan (n, c, m, M)	A 3-class attribute sampling plan is determined by the number of samples that must be tested (n), the level (or number of germs) authorised (m), the maximum level authorised (M) and the number of samples showing a result between m and M (c).
Audit	A systematic and independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives (source: Regulation No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules). The term 'audit' is used in the internal validation of self-evaluation systems.
Authority	(or Competent Authority) central authority of a State (e.g.: food agency, ministry, etc.) competent to organise official controls and to validate self-evaluation systems.
Cause	An activity, factor or situation responsible for introducing a hazard or increasing it to an unacceptable level.

Checklist	Tool comprising a complete inventory of the points to be checked, which is completed by inspectors on the basis of what they observe.
Clean water	Water that does not compromise food safety in the circumstances of its use.
Cleaning	The removal of soil, food residue, dirt, grease or other objectionable matter.
<i>Codex Alimentarius</i>	Set of internationally recognised laws and standards applicable to processes, directives and recommendations on food, food production and food safety. The name is Latin for 'food book'. The texts that make up this system of laws and standards are drawn up by the <i>Codex Alimentarius</i> Commission (CAC), an institution set up by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
Commodity	A type of plant, plant product or other article being moved for trade or other purpose.
Commodity pest list	A list of pests occurring in an area which may be associated with a specific commodity.
Compliance procedure (of a consignment)	Official procedure used to verify that a consignment complies with phytosanitary import requirements or phytosanitary measures related to transit.
Contaminant	Any biological or chemical agent, foreign matter, or other substances not intentionally added to food which may compromise food safety or suitability.
Contamination	Introduction or occurrence in a food product, storage area, means of transport or container of pests or other regulated contaminants, without there being infestation (see infestation).
Contamination (or alteration)	Occurrence or introduction in a food product of biological, chemical or physical substances, in a quantity sufficient to endanger health or to render this food product unfit for human consumption.
Control (noun)	The state wherein correct procedures are being followed and criteria are being met.
Control (verb)	To take all necessary actions to ensure and maintain compliance with criteria established in the HACCP plan.
Control measure	Any action and activity that can be used to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level. Any measure that can be used to prevent, limit or eliminate an identified hazard.
Control point	A step in a system where specific procedures can be applied to achieve a defined effect and can be measured, monitored, controlled and corrected.
Corrective action	Any action to be taken when the results of monitoring at the CCP indicate a loss of control.

Critical Control Point (CCP)	A step at which control can be applied and is essential to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or to reduce it to an acceptable level.
Critical limit	A criterion which separates acceptability from unacceptability. Deviation: Failure to meet a critical limit.
Cultivation	Any agricultural action or practise used by growers to preserve and improve the conditions for growing fresh fruits or vegetables in the field.
Disinfection	The reduction, by means of chemical agents and/or physical methods, of the number of micro-organisms in the environment, to a level that does not compromise food safety or suitability.
Distribution	Placing of a product on the market without any major changes to the nature of the product.
Dose-response	Determining the relationship between the amount of exposure (dose) to a chemical, biological or physical agent, and to severity and/or frequency of the resulting effects on health (response).
Efficacy (treatment)	A defined, measurable, and reproducible effect of a prescribed treatment.
Establishment	Any building or area in which food is handled, as well as the surroundings under the control of the same management.
Export	Sending plants, vegetables or other materials to another country.
FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation)	The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation is an organisation that fights hunger in the world.
Flow diagram	A systematic representation of the sequence of steps or operations used in the production or manufacture of a particular food item.
Food handler	Any person who directly handles packaged or unpackaged food, food equipment and utensils, or food contact surfaces and is therefore expected to comply with food hygiene requirements.
Food hygiene	Comprises conditions and measures necessary to ensure safe and suitable food at all steps of the food chain (guaranteeing fitness for human consumption).
Food or foodstuff	Any substance or product, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably expected to be ingested by humans.
Food safety	Assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use.
Food suitability	Assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use.
Fresh	Living; not dried, deep-frozen or otherwise conserved.
Fruits and vegetables	Category of commodity corresponding to the fresh parts of plants intended for consumption or processing, not for planting (FAO, 1990; revised ICPM, 2001).

HACCP	A system which identifies, evaluates, and controls hazards which are significant for food safety.
HACCP Plan	A document prepared in accordance with the principles of HACCP to ensure control of hazards which are significant for food safety in the segment of the food chain under consideration.
Hazard	A biological, chemical or physical agent in, or condition of, food with the potential to cause an adverse effect to human, animal or vegetable health.
Hazard analysis	Approach that consists of collecting and evaluating data on risks and the factors that lead to these risks, in order to decide which pose a threat to food safety and should thus be taken into account in the HACCP plan.
Host pest list	List of pests that that infest a plant species, globally or in an area.
Incidence	The number of <i>new</i> cases of a disease per population for a given time unit. Incidence should not be confused with prevalence, which indicates how many people/animals in a given population suffer from a disease at a given time.
Incremental sample	A quantity of material taken from a single place in the lot or sub-lot.
Inspection	Controlling the performance of the self-evaluation system, either by an authorised ICB or by an official control service.
Inspector	Person authorised, by a public or private, national or international, organisation to carry out this task. Synonym of "controller".
IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention)	The IPPC is an international plant health agreement that aims to undertake actions to prevent the introduction and spread of pests and to promote adequate pest control measures.
Iteration	Process that is repeated, making it possible to perform calculations.
JECFA (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives)	The JECFA is an international scientific expert committee administered jointly by the FAO and the WHO. Initially set up to evaluate the safety of food additives, its work now also includes the evaluation of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants.
Laboratory sample	The sample sent to, or received by, the laboratory. A representative quantity of material removed from the bulk sample.
Latent infection	Infection for which no clinical signs of infection can be detected.
Legislation	The set of laws, decrees, regulations, directives or other administrative measures adopted by a government. Phytosanitary legislation refers to the phytosanitary regulations of the FAO.

Limit of detection (LOD)	The lowest quantity of a substance that can be distinguished, by analytical testing, from the absence of that substance within a pre-determined acceptable statistical certainty. For substances that have no admissible values, the detection capacity is the smallest concentration at which an analysis method can demonstrate that a sample is in fact polluted.
Lot (for animals)	A group of animals living together.
Lot (plants)	<p>Set of units (plants or plant products): (1) belonging to the same plot of land or same section of this plot, which was planted at approximately the same time, received the same treatments, and which has not yet been harvested; (2) single commodity, identifiable by its homogeneity of composition, origin, etc., forming part of a consignment.</p> <p>According to the standard ISPM No 31, a lot to be sampled (to control the consignment) should be a number of units of a single commodity identifiable by its homogeneity in factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - origin; - grower; - packing facility; - species, variety, or degree of maturity; - exporter; - area of production; - regulated pests and their characteristics; - treatment at origin; - type of processing.
Manure	Animal excrement which may be mixed with litter or other material.
Mark	An official stamp or brand, internationally recognised, applied to a regulated article to attest its phytosanitary state.
Maximum authorised levels	Maximum residue levels of plant protection products and nitrates, established respectively in Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 and Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 on maximum residue levels of certain contaminants in food.
Maximum residue level (MRL)	Upper legal level of a concentration for a pesticide residue in or on food or feed set on the basis of good agricultural practice and the lowest consumer exposure necessary to protect vulnerable consumers.
Mesophile (flora or germ)	Mesophilic micro-organisms are those that multiply between 20 and 45°C, with optimum growth at 37°C. They can be found in foods kept at room temperature. The main species of germs and bacteria can be classified as mesophiles, in particular pathogens, but also spoilage bacteria.
Microbiological criterion	A microbiological criterion for food defines the acceptability of a product or a food lot based on the absence, presence or number of micro-organisms including parasites, and/or the quantity of their toxins/metabolites per unit(s) of mass, volume, area or lot.

Micro-organisms	Includes yeasts, moulds, bacteria, viruses and parasites or any other live organism not observable to the naked eye. Occasionally, the term 'microbe' is used.
Monitor	The act of conducting a planned sequence of observations or measurements of control parameters to assess whether a CCP is under control.
NOAEL (No Observed Adverse Effect Level)	Level of exposure, expressed, for example, in $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg bw}/\text{day}$, for which no negative effect on health has been found. This level is determined through testing on animals.
Notification level	Limit value from which an operator/laboratory/certification or inspection body is obliged to notify authorities about a given parameter/matrix.
OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health)	Intergovernmental organisation responsible for promoting animal health at global level.
Operator	Natural or legal person responsible for respecting the rules established in regulations on self-evaluation, mandatory notification and traceability in the food chain under its management.
Organism	Any biological entity that can reproduce and multiply in its natural state (ISPM No 3, 2005). A quarantine pest is a pest of potential economic importance to the endangered area and either not yet present there or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled.
Oro-faecal route	Transmission route of a pathogen found in the faeces (excrement), which is involuntarily ingested through contact between the mouth and soiled hands or when this agent has been transmitted to food by unwashed hands or soiled objects. Many parasites are transmitted in this way.
Packaging	Placing a product in a container or recipient in direct contact with the product concerned. Also the actual container or recipient.
Pathogen	Micro-organism capable of causing injury or illness.
Percentile	A percentile of a set of data is one of the 99 points along the orderly set of data divided into 100 parts of equal size. The 95th percentile, for example, is a number that is higher than or equal to 95% of the data and less than or equal to 5%.
Performance criteria	Result required by one or more control measures that have been implemented, at one or more production stages, to guarantee food safety. If performance criteria are established, they must account for the foodstuff's initial degree of contamination by the microbiological hazard and any changes that occur in this degree of contamination during production, processing, distribution, storage, preparation and consumption of this foodstuff.
Performance objective (PO)	The maximum frequency and/or concentration of a hazard in a food at a specified step in the food chain before the time of consumption that provides or contributes to a Food Safety Objective (FSO).

Pest	Any animal or insect of public health importance including, but not limited to, cockroaches, rodents, etc. that may carry pathogens that can contaminate food.
Pesticide residues	Remnants, including active substances, metabolites and/or products generated by the degradation or reaction of the active substances used, presently or in the past, as contaminants on or in a food.
Phytosanitary Certificate	Certificate patterned after the model certificates of the IPPC.
Phytosanitary inspection	Official visual examination of plants, plant products or other regulated articles to determine whether pests are present and/or to determine compliance with phytosanitary regulations (FAO, 1990; revised CEPM, 1999).
Place of production	Any premises or collection of fields operated as a single production or farming unit. This may include production sites which are separately managed for phytosanitary purposes.
Plant products	Unmanufactured material of plant origin (including grain) and those manufactured products that, by their nature or that of their processing, may create a risk for the introduction and spread of pests.
Potable water	Water which meets the quality standards of drinking water as described in the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality.
Precautionary principle	Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 describes the precautionary principle as follows: In specific circumstances where, following an assessment of available information, the possibility of harmful effects on health is identified but scientific uncertainty persists, provisional risk management measures necessary to ensure the high level of health protection chosen in the Community may be adopted, pending further scientific information for a more comprehensive risk assessment.
Pre-harvest control	Control of certain fruit and vegetable species made before harvest by an approved producers' organisation or other approved body. This control consists in sampling the lot and analysing it in an accredited laboratory (for example, to detect certain residues and, if one or more maximum levels are exceeded, to monitor the batch concerned).
Prevalence	How many people/animals in a given population suffer from a disease at a given time.
Primary production	Those steps in the food chain up to and including, for example, harvest, slaughter, milking and fishing. The set of steps taken in the growing and harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables such as planting, irrigation, application of fertilizers, application of agricultural chemicals, etc.
Primary production - plants	The production of plants, fruits and vegetables intended for trade and processing, or as fresh food or feed. Primary production: production and growing of primary products, including harvest.

Producers' organisation	Organisation as defined in article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) 2200/96 of 28 October 1996 on the common organization of the market in fruit and vegetables.
Product inspection	Controlling whether the quality and quantity of a lot corresponds to the conditions contained in the order form
PS	Private, or voluntary, standard: industry-defined production standard compiled in reference systems or technical specifications.
Quality	All characteristics relating to the nature, state, composition, nutritional aspects, packaging and labelling.
Quarantine	Official confinement of products for observation and research or for further inspection, testing and/or treatment.
Recall	Any measure applied after distribution that aims to prevent consumption or use of a product and/or to inform about the danger involved if the product has already been consumed.
Registration	(1) Document in a quality system; (2) Data; (3) Identification of a product or an operator and his establishment.
Regression analysis	Statistical technique for analysing data which focuses on a (possible) specific relation (called a <i>regression function</i>) between variables.
Risk	Probability that a hazard will cause an effect considered to be 'harmful' to consumer health (health risk) or to that of plants (phytosanitary risk). When hazards can be identified and the risks analysed their impact on health can generally be predicted. Food risk is that to which the consumer is exposed on eating.
Risk assessment - deterministic	The deterministic method, for each variable of the model, uses a single point estimate (such as the average) to determine the result of the model.
Risk assessment - probabilistic	In the probabilistic method, the model variables are considered as distribution values.
Sampling	Controlling a product based on analysis of a sample taken for this purpose. The act of taking a sample.
Sampling plan	The steps, collection method and number of samples that must be taken and tested to ensure the control and monitoring of a process.
Saprophyte (flora or germ)	Micro-organisms that develop from food products or non-living organic matter (milk, excrement, humus, etc.) which they decompose and putrefy. Many fungi and bacteria are saprophytes. Although they are not often directly pathogens, they can produce toxins that can lead to poisoning.
Scenario analysis	In a scenario analysis, various risk management measures ('scenarios') are compared in order to study which is more apt to limit the risk. Scenario analysis can also be used when the current state of knowledge precludes a single evaluation of risks, i.e. if information is missing or insufficient to attribute a probability to different scenarios.

Self-assessment	Set of measures taken by operators to ensure that the products they manage at all production, processing and distribution stages meet food safety legal requirements and product quality and traceability requirements; and that there is effective control of these requirements. The term 'self-assessment system' means the application of rules regarding hygiene and record-keeping.
Sensitivity analysis	Method used to examine which variables, in a hazard analysis model, have the greatest impact on the results of this model.
Spreading	The transfer of contamination to the healthy (parts of) plants through contact with the diseased (parts of) plants. Spreading is often associated with the presence of exudate on the (parts of the) plants infected by the bacteria. Large quantities of bacteria accumulate in an oozing substance (exudate) formed in specific conditions. The exudate also protects bacteria against unfavourable external conditions such as drying, sunlight or heat. Bacteria can thus survive several months in this exudate.
Standard	(1) Limit established by regulation (2) Document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.
Step	A point, procedure, operation or stage in the food chain including raw materials, from primary production to final consumption.
Storage area(s)	The place or set of places where foodstuffs are stored
Stored Product	Unmanufactured plant product intended for consumption or processing, stored in a dried form (this includes in particular grain and dry fruits and vegetables).
Surveillance/ Monitoring	Careful observation of events that have a risk or significant impact on health. National monitoring/surveillance plans are an essential tool for food safety and for added value in exported products: - effective and complete plans provide a guarantee of product quality; - regular publication of their results provides information on the stringent controls conducted by a State's inspection and phytosanitary services in order to protect consumer health.
Third party	See ICB. Party that has no vested interest in its action.
Tolerance level (for a pest)	Incidence of a pest. Specifies a threshold for action to control that pest or to prevent its spread or introduction.
Traceability	The ability to follow the movement of a food through all the stages of production, distribution and processing.
TRV (Toxicological reference value)	A general expression to designate toxicological parameters such as ADI (acceptable daily intake), AOEL (acceptable operator exposure level), etc.

Uncertainty	Also called epistemic uncertainty, this is a lack of perfect knowledge. When uncertainty is associated with variability, it becomes impossible to predict what will happen in the future.
Validation	Obtaining evidence that the elements of the HACCP plan are effective.
Variability	Variability means heterogeneity or diversity in a pre-defined population. It can also mean the consequence of incomplete knowledge and thus, when associated with uncertainty, makes it impossible to predict what will happen in the future.
Variability - interspecies	Variability among different species.
Variability - intraspecies	Variability within the same species.
Verification	The application of methods, procedures, tests and other evaluations, in addition to monitoring to determine compliance with the HACCP plan.
WHO	The World Health Organization (WHO) is a United Nations organisation established to provide an overview of global public health aspects, coordinate public health activities and improve the health of the global population.
Withdrawal	Any measure aiming to prevent the distribution and display for sale of a product, as well as its availability to consumers.
Wood packaging material	Wood or wood products (excluding paper products) used to support, protect or carry a commodity (includes dunnage) (ISPM No 15, 2002).